

MORE PUNCH REQUIRED

Wycombe Wanderers 0,
Ilford 0

THE FIRST problem manager-coach Barry Darvill must solve in 1968 is to improve Wycombe Wanderers' accuracy in front of goal. Against Ilford the lack of finishing thrust up front was sadly noticeable throughout the 90 minutes.

Wycombe supporters were treated to a display which they have seen all too often this season. The home forwards created the chances, but time and again failed to convert them.

This match would certainly not have been included in a coach's textbook. There was far too much 'kick and rush' and an 'anywhere will do' attitude from both teams.

PENALTY MISS

Ilford, of course, must have been happy with the result. They came with the idea of forcing a draw and this they achieved, although they might have had both points had not Fyfield missed a 34th-minute penalty.

Perhaps the bright spot of the afternoon was Peter Eyes' performance at right-half. Eyes was drafted into the side as a replacement for Barry Baker, who was an influenza victim.

Eyes gave a tenacious and sparkling display. He certainly looks a better player at wing-half where he can use his natural attacking flair to full advantage.

He often came up in support of the attack, making some intelligent overlapping runs on the right wing. Also he was not afraid to try his luck from around the 25-yard mark.

For this match manager-coach Barry Darvill switched Tony Horseman to centre-forward, giving Les Merrick the inside-left berth.

Horseman saw more of the ball than he did against Oxford City four days previously, but his finishing lacked the sharpness which once made him the most feared striker in the amateur game.

Territorially, Wycombe were well on top and opened brightly with a combined move between Beck, Eyes and Horseman, before Merrick headed narrowly over the top.

The defence was never really in too much trouble against the

visiting forwards, except for that one occasion in the 34th minute. However, it was noticeable that Vince Faulkner has lost the crispness and authority in his sliding tackles.

Some terrible indecision in the box cost Wycombe a clear-cut interval lead. Horseman, when clean through and with only the keeper to beat, fired straight at James. Holmes only had to make connection with one pass to be certain to score but missed completely.

FIRST TIME

Ilford penetrated the Wycombe rearguard for the first time in the 34th minute and were awarded a penalty. Fyfield streaked on to a pass from Coughlan, and Rundle had little choice in committing a foul in order to stop Fyfield from scoring. So, for the second match in succession, Maskell was left facing a spot-kick but Fyfield slammed his shot against the right-hand post and the ball was scrambled clear.

Minutes before the interval Wanderers were unlucky not to take the lead. From a Davies corner horseman sent in a powerful header which brought a tremendous save from James as he turned the ball against the underside of the bar. After a hectic melee in the goalmouth the ball was eventually cleared.

In the second half conditions became a little more testing as driving rain made the surface treacherous. Still Wycombe had their chances: Holmes shot at James from an acute angle and Gale fired wide from 10 yards.

A late tactical switch enabled Davies and Holmes to swap wings. This nearly paid dividends when, from Holmes' inswinging corner Rundle, now used as a blatant attacker, placed his effort inches wide of the left-hand post. However, Ilford were far from finished and nearly snatched both points seven minutes from the end. From Coe's cross Fyfield's diving header appeared to beat Maskell but sneaked inches wide of the right-hand post.

Wycombe: J. Maskell; J. Beck, I. Rundle; P. Eyes, V. Faulkner, C. Gale; P. Davies, K. Samuels, A. Horseman, L. Merrick, S. Holmes.

Wycombe 0 Ilford 0

STRUGGLING TO break a two-month losing sequence Wycombe Wanderers gave a mediocre display against unimpressive Ilford in this Isthmian League game.

Wycombe had the edge in midfield but were badly off the target with top marksman Tony Horseman erratic. Ilford inside-left Fyfield fluffed the great scoring chance in the 35th minute when, after being fouled in the penalty area, his spot kick hit an upright and rolled clear.